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U. S. Department of Agriculture

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Housekeepers' Chat

Wednesday, June 25, 1930.

Not for Publication

Subject: "How to Get Prompt Obedience." Information from Edith Dixon, Extension Service, N. J. College of Agriculture. Menu and recipe from Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletin available: "Infant Care."

--ooOoo--

Little Billy is growing up. He is beginning to take an interest in his appearance. Yes, he even washes his ears nowadays, without being urged. Time was, and not many months ago, when Billy considered it a sheer waste of time to wash his neck, and his ears.

"Aw, Aunt Sammy," he would say, "What's the use to be so clean? I get dirty again right away."

Children will grow up, and go away to school, and first thing we know they're setting up homes of their own. Well, it's the way of the world, and so far, I haven't discovered any better way.

The other day I read a charming poem ---- "Grandmother's Brook," by Rachel Field. Do you mind if I read it?

Grandmother tells me about a brook
She used to cross on her way to school;
A quick, brown brook with a rushing sound,
And moss green edges, thick and cool.
When she was the age that I am now
She would cross over it, stone by stone.
I like to think how she must have looked
Under the greenery, all alone.

But sometimes I ask her: "Is it there,
That brook you played by--the same, today?"
And she says she hasn't a doubt it is--
It's children who change and go away.

And now -- to proceed to the business of the morning, which is a brief lecture on "How to Get Obedience from Children." No -- don't think that I am taking my subject too seriously. If I could find the secret of getting obedience from obstreperous children, I could make a mint of money, and travel around the world

in my own private steamship.

Edith Dixon, a child specialist of New Jersey, is responsible for our lecture this morning, on "How to Get Obedience." Says Miss Dixon, "Many parents are annoyed because their children do not obey promptly, yet by the practice of repeating requests, children are being taught inattention.

"The custom in the army, of calling men to attention before any order is given, is a significant point in training children. Too often, requests are shot into the blue, while the child is doing something else, and only half listening, if at all. Every time we repeat a request, we weaken the tendency on the part of the child to attend at the first sound of the voice."

Let me interrupt Miss Dixon here, for a minute. Don't you find it true, as she says, that every time you repeat a request, you weaken your child's tendency to pay attention to what you're saying? Billy has a young friend who is "on" to the ways of parents. Last night Mrs. Rankin called her son six times. I heard Billy say, "Your mother's calling you, Tom. Guess you'll have to go home." "Not yet," said Tom. "She's only called six times. Besides I don't really have to go till Dad whistles for me." And he didn't.

To resume with Miss Dixon's lecture: "There are many reasons why it may not be possible for a child to give immediate attention to a request, and the wise parent will go to the child, and discover first what he is engaged in doing. This will take more time, but it will pay in the end.

"Sometimes one finds that the child is doing a task which he was given, but which we had forgotten. Sometimes he is engrossed in a piece of school work which would be totally lost, if he stopped before completing it. Sometimes he has reached a point in a story which any adult would feel impelled to finish. Sometimes he is absorbed in a piece of construction work which he should be allowed to leave at a satisfactory point.

"The wise parent will reserve his request until he knows the situation. He is then in a better position to secure the complete attention of the child, which is so essential if the directions given are to register.

"If it becomes necessary to interrupt, the parent will apologize as he naturally would to a grown person. Such treatment is bound to make the child feel more ready to obey. And the point of the whole story lies in the fact that the more the child practices obeying pleasantly, the more likely he is to keep it up."

And that's the end of my lecture. There are many things we can learn from child specialists, from books written about the behavior of children, from experience and observation. I have been reading a new book recently, part of which I disagree with, as I told Uncle Ebenezer.

"That's all right," said Uncle Ebenezer, in his kindly fashion. "No doubt, Aunt Sammy, you have learned a few things about children yourself -- having brought up a number of them. Every child is an individual. No man is wise enough to write a book which will settle all the problems of childhood -- just like that. And remember that in spite of all the books that are written about them, children still continue to grow up and amount to something."

And now -- to proceed to the next item of business -- a children's menu: Beef Broiled on Toast; String Beans; Scalloped Tomatoes; and Spanish Cream.

There ought to be a fancy name for this Beef Broiled on Toast. Can anyone suggest an appropriate title? There are four ingredients necessary, to make this delicious combination:

1 and 1/2 pounds ground raw beef	1/4 cup butter or other fat
8 slices of bread	Salt and pepper to taste

Four ingredients -- five, if you count salt and pepper as two: (Repeat)

Toast the slices of bread on one side. Butter the untoasted side. Cover to the edge with a layer of the ground beef. Dot with the butter or other fat. Broil under a flame, for 5 to 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Serve at once, with a garnish of parsley.

And our menu, reading from left to right, is as follows: Beef Broiled on Toast; String Beans -- quick-cooked and fresh green; Scalloped Tomatoes; and Spanish Cream. There's a recipe for Spanish Cream -- lots of milk and eggs in this dessert-- in the old reliable green cookbook, on page 56.

Do you realize that I have not mentioned a single bulletin today? This will never do. Since it's Wednesday, I'll call your attention to the publication on "Infant Care," which, as I have said many times before, is a good textbook for all parents.

Thursday: "Jelly from Early Summer Fruits."

